

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	(ii)
2. PREFACE	1
3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	3
4. STAFF TRAINING	5
5. CAREER PLANNING	7
6. SUCCESSION PLANNING	10
7. HIGH/Low PERFORMANCE	12
8. RECRUITMENT	15
9. COMMUNICATION	16
10. CLASSIFICATION/COR	23
11. PARALLEL STREAMING	26
12. HIGH STRESS/HIGH PRESSURE	28
13. ORIENTATION	31
14. CONCLUSIONS	34

FINAL REPORT:IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONSOF THE HUMAN RESOURCES TASK FORCE

Ministry of Environment & Energy
 Approvals Branch Library

APPROVALS BRANCH
 HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
 SEPTEMBER 1988

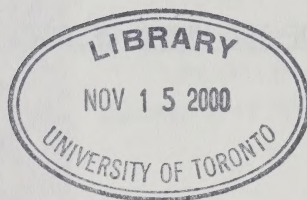


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	(ii)
2.	PREFACE	1
3.	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	2
4.	STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	5
5.	CAREER PLANNING	8
6.	SUCCESSION PLANNING	10
7.	HIGH/LOW PERFORMANCE	12
8.	RECRUITMENT STAFFING	15
9.	COMMUNICATION	18
10.	CLASSIFICATION/COMPENSATION	23
11.	PARALLEL STREAMING	26
12.	HIGH STRESS/HIGH PRESSURE	28
13.	CREDENTIALISM	31
14.	CONCLUSIONS	34

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Chairmain:

Linda Matthews - Waste Sites & Systems Approvals Unit

Secretary:

Nicki Bertucci - Certificate & Licence Processing Unit

Sheldon Benner - Noise Assessment Unit and Systems Support Unit

Don Carr - Municipal Approvals Section

Clytie Hope - Pesticides Licencing Unit

Ana Javor - Industrial Approvals Section

Phil Joseph - Land Use Planning & Noise Assessment Section

Pat McDuff - Administration Unit

John McNeely - Waste Sites & Systems Approvals Unit

John Patterson - Industrial Approvals Section

Liz Stanley - Land Use Planning Unit

Mark Turner - Waste Sites & Systems Approvals Unit

Sabri Unsal - Municipal Approvals Section

PREFACE

A Human Resources Committee of the Approvals Branch was set up in July 1987. Included in its terms of reference was a responsibility to evaluate those recommendations of the Humans Resources Task Force Report "Moving Ahead", which were identified as having potential for the Branch; and to prepare an action plan for subsequent implementation of related recommendations. The Branch Committee in its first year of operation has considered this to be a primary and immediate responsibility, and has spent a large amount of its time on preparing this report. The 49 recommendations of the Task Force Report were reviewed one by one and those in which the Branch had direct interest were identified. That identification is reflected in the eleven chapters which follow on performance management, staff training and development, career planning, succession planning, high/low performance, recruitment/staffing, communication, classification/compensation, parallel streaming, high stress/high pressure and credentialism.

Individuals were allocated by the Branch Committee to draft each of the chapters. In some case, consultation was obtained from sources outside the Branch Committee. In the case of credentialism, a circular was distributed to all members of the Branch and a three-person team co-ordinated the response. The subsequent draft statements were reviewed and revised by the Branch Committee and this report is the outcome of that process.

For those recommendations that can be dealt with in the Branch, it is intended that an action plan for implementation in the immediate future be developed in conjunction with the Branch Director. Other recommendations that extend beyond the authority of the Branch should be forwarded by the Director to the appropriate Sections/Committees for review and action as necessary.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/39162016040134>

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Performance Management in the Civil Service relies almost exclusively on performance review, performance evaluation or what is commonly called performance appraisal. In the Approvals Branch there are various types of performance review in place but they are not consistent in regularity or content.

DISCUSSION

The observations were that there is some form of performance review in place at present but because it is so complex and time consuming some managers tend to avoid the exercise. It is clear also that a newly appointed supervisor with new responsibilities for staff may not have formal training in human resources management and may not be clear on how to carry out performance reviews, etc. This situation allows for unfair evaluation.

It is felt that management should convey the guidelines for performance evaluation to staff who may be unaware of their contents. Where there are unusual situations in the case of low performance, tardiness, etc. a review should be carried out on a more frequent basis.

In order to ensure fairness in performance reviews staff should be made aware of department goals and objectives. Managers/Supervisors should develop a communication link with staff in the form of monthly meetings where policies and procedures are discussed, and to re-evaluate depart-

ment production, etc. This type of communication link would help to identify human resources problems immediately.

It is understood that a new form is being designed by the Human Resources Branch for the use of performance evaluation. This form will be standardized and will be acceptable to all staff.

In order to implement the performance management process an anniversary date should be established for all staff. Performance reviews would normally be carried out on that date. The Human Resources Branch should follow up with the Branch Director, should a performance review not be received within one month of the anniversary date for each employee.

It is felt that annual performance appraisals for all staff, regardless of their position within their individual salary range is necessary to ensure continuing feedback with respect to productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Managers/Supervisors must prepare an evaluation form for each employee at least annually. The performance appraisal should be discussed with the employee before it is signed.
2. Staff should be given the right to a hearing with the Director and Human Resources Branch if he or she considers there has been an unfair evaluation.
3. The Committee should be given the opportunity to review and comment on the design of a new evaluation form.

4. Managers/Supervisors must attend a course or workshop pertaining to Performance Management.
5. Performance and production goals should be established as part of the performance appraisal. These goals would be established by management with the input of the employee.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

It is recognized that the current approach of this Ministry to staff training and development is not adequate. The Human Resources Branch is currently revising the Ministry's staff training and development program to produce a comprehensive program that reflect the needs of the Ministry and staff. The majority of training and staff development courses are now being offered in house. Staff may also continue to take courses being offered by outside groups.

All divisions have been asked to contribute to the identification of training needs.

In the Approvals Branch staff training and development has a particular significance because of the constantly changing technical nature of the work to be performed. It is also important to ensure the initial and ongoing development of new staff in the Branch.

DISCUSSION

The Branch Human Resources Committee supports the recommendations in the "Moving Ahead" document for staff training and development.

The Committee agrees that better information should be made available on courses and conferences that may be of interest to Branch staff. In general, the required courses are available. The Committee supports a recent initiative by some Branches to have one day seminars on

new programs, policies, etc. and would like to see this expanded and formalized within the Approvals Branch.

Core courses should be identified for all positions. Additional courses should be identified for entry level positions and for staff that have expressed an interest in supervisory/management positions.

Barriers to participation in courses include a lack of support by management and heavy workloads. Funding is also a constraint for out of province courses and conferences.

Attendance at courses seems to be more directly linked to high workload and a shortage of person years rather than funding, although this may change as a result of the recent constraints. Whatever the constraints, it should be recognized that course attendance is essential to the continued productivity of the Branch. Conferences are highly desirable/essential as they are often the only venue for state of the art information. It is recognized that if the Branch is to move towards specialization, currency with the state of the art is essential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Branch Director should ensure that managers assume a stronger role in staff development. Managers should identify training needs relevant to the various positions within the Branch. This would include the identification of courses that are required for various positions and ensuring that those courses are available to staff.
2. The Branch Director should ensure that discussion on course selection is a component of each performance

appraisal. Specific courses or areas where training would be beneficial should be identified at that time.

3. Supervisors and Managers should ensure that time is allocated for course attendance.
4. Information on the availability and quality of courses and conferences should be kept in the Branch library. Individual staff should be encouraged to forward this information to the library as it becomes available. A file should be kept which includes course/conference evaluations for all staff that have attended.
5. Managers and Supervisors should recognize the educational value of conferences and provide for individuals to participate where appropriate. In specialized areas, conferences are often the only venue available for obtaining state of the art information.
6. The cost and approval of out of province travel limits accessibility to some courses and conferences. Managers and Supervisors should examine innovative alternatives, such as inviting the organizers to Toronto for a special presentation to Ministry staff.
7. A training and development plan should be developed to train entry level staff for the particular requirements of that job. This plan should include the designation of a Unit member as a resource. A one day orientation course for the Branch should also be developed that would include the video prepared by the Human Resources Branch.

CAREER PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Career planning can benefit individuals and the Branch/Ministry by increasing staff experience and skills. The Branch therefore has a responsibility to ensure that the career aspirations of individuals are considered through the use of secondment/developmental/rotational positions.

This chapter examines the use of secondment/developmental/rotational positions with the goal of meeting the needs of individuals and the Branch/Ministry.

DISCUSSION

The Branch Human Resources Committee supports the recommendations in the "Moving Ahead" document for career planning.

The Committee agreed that appropriate secondment/developmental/rotational positions within the Branch should be identified and the utilization of these opportunities be accelerated.

Barriers to applying for a secondment/developmental/rotational position were identified. Moving expenses is one such barrier and possible approaches to overcome this barrier should be reviewed in more detail by the Branch Human Resources Committee.

The area of search should not be limited when filling secondment/developmental/rotational positions. This will increase the opportunities for individuals in the Ministry to apply for these positions. As the loss of a staff

member who moved to the developmental position does not create a vacancy in his or her previous position and so on, has a domino effect down the line and creates instability and causes staff morale problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Branch Director should encourage Managers and Supervisors to identify individuals who are interested in secondment/developmental/rotational positions. A Branch list of these individuals should be maintained as a continuing and open process.
2. The Branch Director should encourage Managers and Supervisors to identify positions that could be secondment/developmental/rotational positions. A list of these positions and their recommended duration should be made available to Ministry staff.
3. The Director should approach other Branch and Regional Directors to do the same so that lists and staff may be shared.
4. The Director should approach the Human Resources Branch with respect to widening the area of search for secondment/developmental/rotational positions.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Career Planning is a process for individual advancement and Succession Planning is a corporate mechanism to enable this advancement to take place. The two processes should be complimentary at all stages.

In the past, the Ministry had determined the candidates for the "B" list - "potential staff for the Director's position". Management Board would then choose from the "B" list to establish the "A" list or short list. This procedure was a form of succession planning, but it has been discontinued in favour of a newer and more acceptable system to determine successful candidates from internal staff.

DISCUSSION

The role of succession planning appears to be satisfied by the process of career planning (secondment), performance appraisal and establishing training needs therefore the role of succession planning as a separate function is superfluous.

The Committee feels that special lists such as the "A" and "B" are inappropriate as they weaken fair and open competition. Where senior positions are vacant, no better basis can exist upon which to choose an incumbent than by way of a fair competition among well trained staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All succession planning should be done via fair and open competition. (This makes Recommendations 22 through 25 of the Human Resources Task Force Report redundant.)

HIGH/LOW PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

High performance/low performance always involves a strong element of personality or attitudes, both on the part of the employee and the employer, and ultimately relates to feelings of satisfaction or alienation (whether articulated or not). In view of this, it is incumbent on both parties to be honest with and respectful of one another even where disagreements exist.

For the employee, this means that he/she must provide a day's work for a day's pay and must be realistic in terms of career goals and abilities in relation to corporate needs. There must also be a realization that the corporate needs will likely change considerably throughout the term of employment and, as a result, there must be a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances.

For the employer, he must be fair with the employee and, at the very least, present all the facts, both positive and negative. Corporate goals must clearly be enunciated at the entry level and thereafter whenever goals change. In order to continue to receive maximum performance, the employer should realize that the employee also has needs which must be fulfilled such as:

- a supportive/productive environment;
- recognition (leading to feelings of self worth or pride of employment); and

- training to meet new challenges and changing goals.

In this manner, both parties will benefit from the terms of employment and a co-operative, harmonious and productive relationship will result.

DISCUSSION

Overall, low performance of some individuals has not been dealt with effectively within the Branch. This has led to a problem with low morale for staff in general. Therefore, the low performance of individuals needs to be addressed.

High performance promotes efficiency and reduces workload through problem solving attitudes. A higher achiever, properly motivated, requires little direct supervision, is reliable and helpful, and can anticipate and deal with situations before they become problems thus relieving management of much of the current work now being experienced. Encouraging productive individuals leads to innovation, achievement and ultimately results in future higher work place efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General

1. As part of management's goals on performance contracts, Directors and Managers should be required to demonstrate an ability to motivate staff.
2. Management should develop clear, simple criteria against which high and low performance can be measured in terms of corporate goals. Such criteria should be communicated to all staff via the performance appraisal process so that they may be

easily implemented and/or enforced (e.g. number of applications proposed with respect to degree and complexity).

High Performance

1. High performers should be recommended for (or be permitted to attend) conferences, seminars and courses outside of the core training requirements for the position.
2. High performance staff should be allowed to suggest their own rewards in lieu of payment or increments in salary.

Low Performance

1. Managers should be required to deal with low performance before it becomes an established routine or behaviour pattern (e.g. immediate and open discussion with the individual) to determine the cause of the poor performance referencing such things as personality conflicts, poor work attitudes, the lack of adequate training or general frustration.
2. An informal, direct approach to resolution of low performance is recommended.
3. Chronic low performance should be dealt with in the employee's annual performance appraisal with remedial actions recommended. Such actions could include referral to MGS Counselling Services, Human Resources Branch or the Private Sector Specialists.

RECRUITMENT/STAFFING

INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Branch is reviewing procedures used for recruiting and staffing within the Ministry as a result of the recommendations in the Task Force Report. The Moher Report, issued by Management Board in 1986, indicated that 1986 procedures unduly limited candidates for management positions. Appointments (throughout the Ontario Public Service) were not always based on a comprehensive search and a fair and thorough assessment of candidates. These problems were reiterated by the Human Resources Task Force Report. Notwithstanding the above, the Branch Committee feels that recommendations should be made that deal with the principle of promotion from within, a recruitment strategy for new graduates, and a streamlining the recruitment process.

DISCUSSION

The Task Force indicated that promotions within the Ministry should be based on merit and that, if a progressive plan of recruiting, training, and developing of new and present employees was adopted, then the concept of promotion from within the Ministry could follow. The Committee feels that Management has followed the principle of promotion from within over the last several years and encourages this plan to be continued although not to the exclusion of obtaining specialists as appropriate where positions require direct consultation with industry then these positions when vacant should be opened up to the consultant/private sector to provide the required amount of specialization when this is unavailable in the Ministry.

The Committee also feels that the Ministry and Branch should continue supporting the intern program. If followed, the intern program and also the Waterloo Co-op Program could be a very satisfactory part of a strategy for obtaining a sufficient number of recent graduates. However, another part of the strategy should be an annual recruitment program at local universities and/or colleges where, for example, the Ministry would post notices on university bulletin boards each January describing the types of positions that would attract good, young graduates. If the Ministry could hire a minimum number of new graduates from the universities and colleges each year, it would help to balance the age structure of the Ministry staff over a period of time.

Several procedures could be changed or improved to reduce the time for recruiting and staffing vacant positions. If job specs were kept up to date by Managers, time would be saved in placing job ads when incumbents give notice of their intention to resign. The responsibility of determining what vacancies should be filled has already been transferred from the Vacancy Panel to Division Heads which will have the effect of reducing the time to fill vacancies. Also, the roles of the Manager and Human Resources Branch should be better defined, which could lead to better planning of competition timing. For example, dates for interviews could be established at the same time as the closing date is set for competitions to ensure that Managers and Personnel Representatives are both available for interviews at the earliest opportunity.

To ensure the continued perception that competitions are fair by process, every effort must be made by Management to ensure impartial interview panels. Chosen panels must act fairly, impartially and without bias. There should be

minimum of two persons on the panel and as many as three or four depending upon the position to be filled. The Human Resources Branch should be invited to participate on these panels, as well as a Regional representative to aid in the technical balance of the panel when appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Branch and Ministry should be encouraged to continue with the principle of promotion from within.
2. When an adequate level of expertise is not available within the Ministry of the Environment then a competition open to the private sector is recommended.
3. The Human Resources Branch in conjunction with other Branches should develop a Ministry strategy for ensuring that a minimum number of new graduates from the university and college level are recruited into the Ministry each year.
4. The Human Resources Branch should develop new procedures for use by all Ministry Managers to allow the recruitment and staffing process to be streamlined and thus, reduce the time to fill vacancies to a minimum.
5. The Approvals and Human Resources Branches should ensure the continued use of impartial interview panels.

COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

Communication involves the giving, exchanging or receiving of information and messages. Effective communication helps to link individuals performing separate and different duties to form a co-ordinated and efficient organization. Poor communication can result in staff not being aware of new information, programs, policies or philosophies of the organization. As well, poor communication may cause duplication of effort and isolation of staff as sections, units or individuals from the rest of the organization. Poor communication can be detrimental to the overall health of the organization.

DISCUSSION

Communication for staff of the Approvals Branch can be divided into three categories:

- (a) internal communication within the Branch which includes:
 - (i) communication among staff, and
 - (ii) communication between management (Director and Managers and Supervisors) and staff,
- (b) external communication with MOE staff outside the Branch, and
- (c) external communication with the public.

The first type, internal communication among staff, is affected by current workload problems, as well as stress

and pressure associated with the clients. There are currently no mechanisms in place for staff to communicate effectively and efficiently on a timely basis. The physical organization of offices does not promote communication as staff are spread out over three different floors of the building. Low morale further discourages such communication.

Poor communication among staff has resulted in poor sharing of project information, as well as new technical information, the isolation of some staff and, in some cases, proponents have received varying and sometimes conflicting advice from different staff.

Internal communication between management and staff is fundamental to the health of the Branch. The Committee has concluded that Supervisors and Managers are absent from their offices too often and are, therefore, not accessible to staff. Supervisors have extensive workloads and, therefore, spend too much time "working" as opposed to supervising and thus cannot communicate effectively with their staff on priority setting, performance feedback, project status and new information. As a result, new information is not communicated to staff, the supervisor is not as fully aware of activities in the unit, and staff have little to no feedback on performance and can become frustrated and discouraged.

External communication with other Ministry of the Environment staff outside the Branch is an essential component of fulfilling our mandate as a Branch and in working towards the fulfilment of our mandate as a Ministry. Branch staff require information from staff of Regional Offices and Branches such as Waste Management, Water Resources and Air Resources on criteria, policies, guidelines and opinions. A lack of or ineffective

communication with other Ministry staff can result in staff being unaware of available information that could assist them in performing their job tasks and can further waste valuable staff time in obtaining information.

The third type of communication, external communication with the public, sets the image of the Branch in the eyes of our clients and the public. The Committee concluded that our current telephone system has had an adverse effect on external communication. Individuals may not be able to reach staff by telephone as a result of the high volume of incoming calls the switchboard is unable to handle incoming messages. This results in messages not being conveyed to staff correctly. The switchboard is further unable to handle time consuming general inquiries. General information calls are often passed from staff member to staff member which results in frustration of the caller which further affects the client's perception of the Branch. It is noted that there are continuing technical difficulties with the current telephone system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Branch Management undertake to develop and maintain a communications plan to ensure that staff are kept current technically, as well as in terms of new or changed Ministry or Government initiatives.
2. The Branch Director have the next Human Resources Committee develop an orientation program for new staff in co-operation with efforts of the Approvals, Project Engineering, Environmental Assessment and Investigations & Enforcement Branches Human Resources Committee.

3. The Committee supports the holding of annual "Awareness" conferences where staff can communicate on a formal and informal basis and be updated with respect to developments and changes in other units and sections in the Branch, such as computerization.
4. The Branch Director support and provide the necessary resources for the development of general information pamphlets and application information kits where needed in the Branch.
5. The Branch Director create an "information officer" position for the Branch. The Committee recommends that the information officer handle all general information calls, requests for information, application kits, etc. Such a position could be implemented as a developmental or training position.
6. The Branch Director have a general inquiry telephone number created for the Branch. The general inquiry line could be handled by the information officer recommended in 5 above.
7. The Branch Director make a commitment to have the necessary changes made to the Branch telephone message centre so that incoming calls and messages can be handled in a more efficient and effective manner, including the need for a bilingual designation to the position.
8. The Branch Managers and Supervisors make themselves more available to staff (e.g. by designating specific time slots) so that improved formal and informal communication is possible.

9. The Branch Managers ensure their Supervisors set priorities, goals and objectives to provide more regular performance feedback to staff.
10. The Supervisors be encouraged to hold regular staff meetings to provide an open forum for staff to update co-workers and the Supervisor with respect to the current status of projects, problems associated with those projects and their overall unit implications.
11. The existing Local Area Network should be extended to all staff as soon as possible.

CLASSIFICATION/COMPENSATION

INTRODUCTION

There are few aspects of a person's job more important than job or position classification. Position classification is important for it not only sets out what the duties and responsibilities of the position are, but also the value the employer places on the work involved - that is, the salary range.

The Ontario Public Service is aware of the importance of proper "position classifications", and has set out in the Ontario Manual of Administration procedures which must be followed in classifying all positions. These procedures are designed to ensure uniformity throughout the Ontario Public Service between positions requiring similar levels of knowledge, skill and experience.

DISCUSSION

There is discontent within the Approvals Branch with the classification of certain positions. Whether this discontent is legitimate or not, (i.e. whether the positions are in fact underclassified or merely perceived to be), does not matter, the result is the same - disgruntled employees and poor morale within the Branch.

The major concern of staff of the Approvals Branch with respect to classification/compensation issues is the lack of a routine periodic review of position descriptions to ensure their continued compatibility with the actual job. Many staff believe their job is no longer accurately reflected in the position description, and as a result, their position may be underclassified. In many instances,

this belief is reinforced when they compare the complexity of their work and the necessary knowledge and experience required to do it with other positions within the Ministry.

There are many ways in which positions may become improperly classified over a period of time. Two such examples are:

° Changes in Duties and Responsibilities

Position descriptions are prepared on the assumption that duties and responsibilities can be defined within limits which will allow a position to be properly classified.

An incumbent however may assume, over a period of time, more duties and responsibilities - either by personal initiative or by having them assigned - so that after a year or two the position is not compatible with its position description.

° Changes in Educational/Experience Requirements

It is not always necessary for an incumbent in a position to assume additional duties and responsibilities to justify the position's reclassification. Reclassification can be justified on the basis of the increasing complexities. If the position were now to be evaluated on the basis of the actual level of knowledge, experience required and responsibility, a higher classification may result.

Another classification problem within the Branch is the dearth of positions at the PM-18 level or equivalent classification. This level serves as a stepping stone

between more junior working levels and lower level management. It may also be used as a higher step within the parallel stream. The result of the absence of positions at this classification level is that staff must transfer out of the section in order to advance. The effect of this is that more experienced staff leave the Branch and any succession plan for filling higher level positions in the Branch is destroyed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All position descriptions should be updated annually, preferably at the time of the performance appraisal. The incumbent in the position should be given the opportunity to review the revised position description.
2. All position classifications should be evaluated in conjunction with the Human Resources Branch at least every two years or at the request of the incumbent.
3. Positions at the PM-18 level or equivalent should be established (perhaps as part of the parallel streaming program) to ensure a consistent promotional path within the Branch from entry and/or management positions.
4. A representative of the Human Resources Branch should attend the annual Branch conferences to discuss initiatives and to answer staff questions. These meetings would be informative to staff, since topics such as "how classification of positions are set" or "how the Human Resources Secretariat determines compensation rates of Ontario Public Servants" could be given.

PARALLEL STREAMING

INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Task Force report "Moving Ahead", dated August 19, 1986, describes the issue with respect to parallel streaming as follows:

"Parallel streaming is the provision of an alternate route of advancement for technical or scientific staff, similar to that available to management."

DISCUSSION

This issue of parallel streaming is especially pertinent to this Branch. Staff have traditionally advanced only by leaving and taking positions with other Branches of the Ministry or the private sector. There typically have been few technical-specialist positions in this Branch at higher levels into which one can advance.

With Branch reorganization, the approach to approvals is towards specialization. This is a prime opportunity to establish parallel streaming pathways in the Branch. The Director and Managers should identify parallel stream positions within the Branch and, in conjunction with the Human Resources Branch, assign classifications appropriate to the levels of responsibility and expertise for each position. Under the existing classification standards, these positions may be classified as high as PM-20 (or equivalent) with no direct managerial responsibilities.

It is anticipated that there are situations where a PM-20 (or equivalent position) may not adequately reflect the

level of technical expertise required for a given technical position in the Ministry. This Branch should support all efforts to review and change the classification standards to permit such higher parallel streaming classification of positions. The task of developing these parallel streaming pathways should be undertaken by the Staff Relations Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This Committee strongly supports the recommendations of the Human Resources Task Force report in support of the idea and implementation of parallel streaming within the Branch.
2. It is recommended that the Director, in consultation with the Managers, identify and develop potential parallel stream positions within the Branch.
3. It is recommended that parallel streaming be implemented as part of the Branch reorganization.
4. It is recommended that the Staff Relations Committee be supported in their task of developing parallel streaming pathways above the PM-20 (or equivalent) level.

HIGH STRESS/HIGH PRESSURE

INTRODUCTION

Stress is an integral and natural part of life and as such, must be dealt with directly. A major source of stress is work and the associated working conditions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to remove or to even identify all causes of work related stress.

There is an optimum stress level or threshold for each individual. Some thrive on heavy stress and high pressure and in fact, peak performances may be achieved during these high stress episodes. On the other hand, people with lower stress tolerances cannot function or maintain their regular work performance during times when stress thresholds are exceeded. This added stress can lead to anxiety, physical nervousness, physical despair and overall poor work performance. "Burn out" of staff may be the ultimate result.

DISCUSSION

Some basic factors that contribute to stress include the workload, physical conditions, accountability, authority and contact with the public and the media.

Perhaps the most common stress causing agent that is dealt with daily is the workload or more precisely the "chronic work overload". The workload, together with requests from regions and other outside agencies and all other necessary routine tasks, can lead to a loss of objectivity, poor performance and elevated stress levels. It must be realized that each individual can only do so much work in a given period of time. It is not a matter of not having

the expertise or confidence to properly complete or evaluate a given project, it is also a matter of having sufficient time to complete it.

A direct result of the workload are the calls from applicants complaining about the long turnover times and requesting the status of their applications. The calls from difficult applicants can easily lead to stressful situations.

The physical conditions in the work environment must be conducive to a healthy and less stressful working environment. Comfortable chairs, proper furniture, adequate lighting, controlled humidity, temperature, heating and ventilation and acceptable noise levels must be considered.

A lack of praise, encouragement or positive reinforcement can severely contribute to stress levels. Importance should be place on recognizing achievements as well as deficiencies.

Finally, the degree of control, responsibility and authority that can be exercised must be established for each different position. Once established, variations should not be practiced routinely for given applications or situations. To minimize stress, some sense of consistency must be present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Management should assist staff in defining their job responsibilities.

2. Management should provide staff with thorough definitions as to what the roles of Supervisors and management are in relation to each staff member.
3. Management must ensure that the office environment (i.e. furniture, lighting, humidity, temperature, heating, air conditioning, ventilation, noise levels and spatial allocations) is conducive to a less stressful working environment.
4. Staff should be given credit for their accomplishments and made aware of their deficiencies.
5. Job classification should be clear on the degree of authority, control and responsibility that may be exercised by the incumbent.
6. All staff should be encouraged to take courses on stress management, how to deal with the public, difficult applicants, workload, the media, etc.

CREDENTIALISM

INTRODUCTION

The issue of credentialism is of interest to the Approvals Branch. Because of the high number of engineers employed, the use of the P.Eng. credential is of special interest. A memo therefore was circulated to each individual in the Branch, requesting comments on the issue of credentialism. A number of comments were received and a subcommittee of three co-ordinated the comments and set up six concerns which were endorsed by the full Human Resources Committee. These concerns were sent to Mary Kardos-Burton, the Chair of a Ministry wide committee set up to consider the issue of credentialism and to put forward recommendations. It was notable that no concerns were expressed regarding the current use of credentials other than the "P.Eng." credential.

DISCUSSION

The six concerns arising from the Branch circulation and discussion are as follows.

1. If a staff member is required to review the work of P.Eng's, it is essential for satisfactory job performance that the staffer also should be a P.Eng.
2. The Professional Engineers' Act, Chapter 13, "Statutes of Ontario, 1984", requires that anyone who engages in the "practice of professional engineering" shall be licenced. The Act clearly applies to all Approvals engineers. It may also apply to others at the Manager/Director level, even where the position does not have a licencing requirement.

3. It is not necessary for Managers to be a P.Eng. if they do not practice engineering as defined in the Professional Engineers' Act. Supervisors in the Approvals Section should be P.Eng.'s if they regularly practice engineering.
4. If Supervisors are not P.Eng.'s, new graduates working for these Supervisors cannot fulfill their A.P.E.O. experience requirements (of the four referees required by the A.P.E.O. with licencing, "at least one of the professional engineer referees should be a direct technical supervisor").
5. If credentials are not required, how could one be sure that a candidate for a new job is capable? It is not practical to determine this at the interview and resumes/references are misleading. It is possible that more use can be made of the probationary period to confirm an incumbent's ability to perform in the absence of credentials.
6. Credentials do not eliminate candidates from competition in the general sense. Those candidates without credentials for a particular job can further their education and obtain those credentials for the next job. Ministry assistance for approved educational courses should be available.

RECOMMENDATION

1. All job specifications within the Branch to be updated and revised to:

(a) eliminate unnecessary credentials;

(b) ensure that the P.Eng. credential is in place only where appropriate

all in accordance with the six concerns expressed herein.

2. The Ministry to provide opportunities for staff to improve their qualifications to meet required job credentials by providing financial and other assistance through an open, well-publicized process.
3. The Approvals Branch Human Resources Committee should be given the opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations of the Ministry Credentialism Committee, when published.

CONCLUSIONS

The chapters of this report are in the same order as the chapters as presented in the Human Resources Task Force Report. This ordering does not mean to imply that any specific priorities are assigned to these recommendations. It is the Committee's position that each recommendation has equal importance.

It should be noted that the implications of financial restraints have not been reviewed by the Committee. It is recognized that this may be an overriding barrier to the implementation of any particular recommendation of this Committee. Nevertheless, it is the position of the Committee that the recommendations, as outlined, represent goals to which the Branch should aspire.

Finally, in the course of the review of the Human Resources Task Force Report during this Committee's tenure, general observations, conclusions and recommendations have been made, and necessarily do not reflect upon one particular chapter of the Human Resources Task Force Report. It is agreed, however, that they have sufficient merit to be included as part of the general conclusions of the report, and are therefore included as follows;

- (a) it is recommended that the Director continue the mandate of this Committee; and
- (b) the Director should discuss with the Branch Human Resources Committee any decisions and/or actions he may make with regard to acceptance/rejection and implementation of the recommendations of this report.



